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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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ALL POSTS PLEASE PASS PAO: ROME FOR THE VATICAN

E.O. 12356: N/A

TAGS: OPRC

SUBJECT: ARA GUIDANCES, FEBRUARY 4, 1992

1. PREPARED PRESS GUIDANCES:

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STATEMENT

VENEZUELA: ATTEMPTED COUP

THE UNITED STATES STANDS IN COMPLETE SUPPORT OF PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ AND HIS GOVERNMENT IN THEIR DEFENSE OF VENEZUELA'S CONSTITUTION. WE CONDEMN AND REJECT ANY ASSAULT ON THAT DEMOCRACY. WE HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THIS HEMISPHERE AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ALSO STAND UNITED IN SUPPORT OF PRESIDENT PEREZ.

VENEZUELA: ATTEMPTED COUP

Q. WHAT IS THE SITUATION IN VENEZUELA?

A. SHORTLY BEFORE MIDNIGHT LAST NIGHT CARACAS TIME, ELEMENTS OF THE VENEZUELAN MILITARY ATTEMPTED A VIOLENT ATTACK AGAINST THE DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ. TROOPS LOYAL TO THE GOVERNMENT RESPONDED IMMEDIATELY. PRESIDENT PEREZ WAS ON TELEVISION THROUGH THE NIGHT. VENEZUELAN POLITICAL LEADERS FROM ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM ALSO PUBLICLY DEFENDED THE CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER.

THE STATE DEPARTMENT ISSUED A STRONG STATEMENT LAST NIGHT CONDEMNING THIS VIOLENT ASSAULT ON VENEZUELAN DEMOCRACY AND STATING COMPLETE U.S. SUPPORT. AFTER BEING INFORMED OF THE REBELLION BY SECRETARY BAKER AT APPROXIMATELY 2:00 A.M., PRESIDENT BUSH PHONED PRESIDENT PEREZ LAST NIGHT AND

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STATED OUR FIRM SUPPORT.

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SOME OF THE FIGHTING TOOK PLACE NEAR THE EMBASSY IN THE CENTER OF CARACAS. TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, ALL AMERICANS APPEAR TO BE SAFE. THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN VENEZUELA CONSISTS OF ABOUT 400 OFFICIALS PLUS THEIR DEPENDENTS OF THE EMBASSY AND THE CONSULATE IN MARACAIBO AND THEIR DEPENDENTS, PLUS ABOUT 20,000 - 25,000 PRIVATE AMERICANS. THE WARDEN SYSTEM WAS ACTIVATED; NO AMERICANS ARE REPORTED MISSING.

Q. WHY DID THIS HAPPEN? WAS IT A SURPRISE?

A. SO FAR IT APPEARS THAT THE COUP ATTEMPT WAS UNDERTAKEN BY A GROUP OF MID- AND LOWER-RANKING OFFICERS.

THERE IS NO SOLID INFORMATION ON THEIR MOTIVE.

FOR SOME WEEKS WE AND OTHER GOVERNMENTS HAVE HEARD OF DISCONTENT IN THE VENEZUELAN MILITARY. SOME OF THESE REPORTS HAVE APPEARED IN THE PRESS. HOWEVER, NEITHER WE NOR THE VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT PREDICTED THIS ACTION.

Q. DID WE CONTEMPLATE MILITARY ASSISTANCE?

A. PRESIDENT PEREZ SPOKE LAST NIGHT TO PRESIDENT BUSH, ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARONSON AND OUR AMBASSADOR, MICHAEL SKOL. IN EACH OF THESE CONVERSATIONS WE ASKED HOW WE COULD HELP. PRESIDENT PEREZ ASKED FOR A STATEMENT OF SUPPORT, WHICH WE ISSUED. HE DID NOT ASK FOR ANY OTHER FORM OF ASSISTANCE.

Q. WAS A TASK FORCE SET UP?

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A. THE SITUATION IS BEING MONITORED BY THE OPERATIONS CENTER AND THE BUREAU OF INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS.

Q. WHEN WAS PEREZ ELECTED?

A. HE WAS ELECTED IN DECEMBER 1988 AND INAUGURATED IN FEBRUARY 1989.

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Q. DO WE GIVE MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID TO VENEZUELA?

A. WE PROVIDE NO MATERIAL AID TO THE VENEZUELAN MILITARY. WE HAVE A SMALL TRAINING PROGRAM -- THE REQUEST FOR THIS YEAR'S PROGRAM IS 175,000.

WE PROVIDE NO ECONOMIC AID TO VENEZUELA.

Q. DID THE U.S. TRAIN THE REBELLIOUS TROOPS?

A. WE DO NOT KNOW EXACTLY WHO THE REBELS ARE. HOWEVER, OUR TRAINING PROGRAM IS VERY SMALL COMPARED TO PROGRAMS IN OTHER COUNTRIES AND COMPARED TO THE SIZE OF THE VENEZUELAN MILITARY. THE VENEZUELAN MILITARY TRAINS MILITARY PERSONNEL IN OTHER COUNTRIES IN LATIN AMERICA.

Q. WHAT DOES THIS SAY ABOUT DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA?

A. DEMOCRACY IS WIDELY CONSIDERED TO BE THE ONLY LEGITIMATE FORM OF GOVERNMENT IN THIS HEMISPHERE. HOWEVER, THERE REMAIN THREATS TO DEMOCRACY, FROM MILITARISTS OF THE LEFT, AS IN PERU, COLOMBIA AND

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GUATEMALA, OR FROM MILITARISTS OF THE RIGHT OR ULTRA-NATIONALISTS, AS WE HAVE SEEN IN HAITI AND VENEZUELA.

Q. WHERE IS HAITIAN PRESIDENT ARISTIDE?

A. WE UNDERSTAND HE IS IN CARACAS.

VENEZUELA: CUT-OFF OF AID IN EVENT OF MILITARY COUP

THERE IS A PROVISION IN 1991 APPROPRIATIONS LEGISLATION REQUIRING A CUT-OFF OF ASSISTANCE IF A DEMOCRATICALLY-ELECTED GOVERNMENT IS OVERTHROWN BY MILITARY ACTION.

OBVIOUSLY, THIS PROVISION DOES NOT APPLY NOW IN THE CASE OF VENEZUELA BECAUSE THE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT PEREZ REMAINS IN POWER.

HAITI: EMBARGO, REPATRIATIONS

Q. ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARONSON SAID YESTERDAY THE U.S. WOULD RETARGET THE EMBARGO ON HAITI. DO YOU HAVE DETAILS?

A. WE HAVE BEEN ANALYZING THE EMBARGO'S EFFECTS TO SEE

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HOW IT CAN BE STRENGTHENED WHILE AT THE SAME TIME TRYING TO REDUCE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE ANY UNINTENDED SUFFERING BY INNOCENT HAITIANS.

THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT IS NOW PREPARED TO GRANT ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS LICENSES TO INDIVIDUAL COMPANIES OPERATING IN THE ASSEMBLY SECTOR IN HAITI BY PERMITTING EXPORT OF
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MATERIALS MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES, ASSEMBLY OF THE FINISHED PRODUCT IN HAITI AND IMPORTING IT BACK TO THE U.S. THE ASSEMBLY SECTOR IN HAITI NORMALLY EMPLOYS AN ESTIMATED 40,000 PEOPLE, ALMOST ALL OF WHOM ARE NOW UNEMPLOYED. EACH OF THESE ASSEMBLY WORKERS SUPPORTS IN TURN AN ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL 6 TO 7 DEPENDENTS. WE WANT TO HELP THESE POOR WORKERS AND ENSURE HAITI DOES NOT LOSE THIS SOURCE OF EMPLOYMENT.

AT THE SAME TIME, WE ARE TRYING TO RETARGET OR FINE TUNE THE EMBARGO TO TIGHTEN ITS EFFECTS ON INDIVIDUALS WHO MAY BE AIDING AND ABETTING FINANCING THE COUP OR MILITARY OR POLICE VIOLENCE. WE ARE CURRENTLY SEEKING TO DEVELOP EVIDENCE AGAINST SUCH INDIVIDUALS. UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE EXECUTIVE ORDER SUCH INDIVIDUALS COULD HAVE THEIR ASSETS IN THE UNITED STATES BLOCKED AND U.S. CITIZENS WOULD BE PROHIBITED FROM ANY FINANCIAL DEALINGS WITH THEM. WE HAVE SEPARATE AUTHORITY TO DENY SUCH INDIVIDUALS VISAS FOR THE UNITED STATES.

Q. WHY ARE YOU TAKING THIS ACTION AT THIS TIME?

A. WE HAVE BEEN MONITORING THE EFFECTS OF THE EMBARGO FROM THE BEGINNING. WE NOW BELIEVE WE HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION TO MAKE FINER DISTINCTIONS ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF THE EMBARGO. OUR INFORMATION IS THAT THE SANCTIONS ON THE ASSEMBLY SECTOR LARGELY AFFECT INNOCENT HAITIANS ONLY AND HAVE NO SERIOUS IMPACT ON THOSE BEHIND THE COUP. HOWEVER, I WOULD STRESS THAT THESE LICENSES WILL BE ISSUED BY TREASURY ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS; IF ONE OF THESE COMPANIES IS IN FACT OWNED BY AN INDIVIDUAL ACTIVELY
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SUPPORTING THE COUP, I DO NOT BELIEVE TREASURY WOULD ISSUE A LICENSE.

Q. WHEN WILL THE NAMES OF THE INDIVIDUALS BE KNOWN AND

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THOSE SANCTIONS ISSUED?

A. WE ARE TRYING TO CARRY OUT A PROCESS OF GATHERING INFORMATION THAT IS FAIR TO ALL CONCERNED. ONCE WE HAVE CREDIBLE INFORMATION WE WOULD BEGIN TO MAKE THESE DECISIONS. I CAN'T GIVE YOU ANY PRECISE DATE. I WOULD POINT OUT THAT SUCH DECISIONS CANNOT BE BASED ON RUMORS ONLY.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, I WOULD REFER YOU TO THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT'S OFFICE OF FOREIGN ASSETS CONTROL.

Q. WHO MONITORED YESTERDAY'S REPATRIATIONS?

A. REPRESENTATIVES OF OUR EMBASSY IN PORT-AU-PRINCE AND THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS WERE ON HAND TO MONITOR THE REPATRIATIONS.

THE RETURNING HAITIANS RECEIVED MONEY FOR TRANSPORTATION AND FOOD. THEY WERE FINGERPRINTED FOR IDENTIFICATION PURPOSES AND LEFT THE PORT WITHOUT INCIDENT.

Q. WHAT MEASURES HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO MONITOR RETURNEES' WELLBEING IN HAITI?

A. WE WILL REMAIN IN CONTACT WITH INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN GROUPS SUCH AS CARE AND THE
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CATHOLIC CHURCH WHO HAVE A NATIONWIDE PRESENCE IN HAITI.

THE OAS HAS AGREED TO MONITOR THE REPATRIATION PROCESS AND IS DEVELOPING A MECHANISM TO DO SO.

WE HAVE RECEIVED NO CREDIBLE REPORTS OF REPRISALS AGAINST ANY INDIVIDUAL HAITIAN WHO ATTEMPTED TO REACH THE UNITED STATES, INCLUDING THOSE WHO WERE REPATRIATED AFTER THE COUP.

HAITI: COUP

Q: DID THE U.S. HAVE A HAND IN THE COUP?

A: THE U.S. SUPPORTED THE ELECTIONS IN HAITI.

-THE U.S. WAS THE FIRST TO RECOGNIZE ARISTIDE AS THE WINNER'

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-THE U.S. HAS GIVEN MORE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE.

-ON THE NIGHT OF THE COUP, OUR AMBASSADOR PUT HIS OWN LIFE AT RISKS

-ANY SUCH STATEMENTS ARE LUDICROUS AND ABSURD.

2. TAKEN QUESTION FROM DEPT. DAILY BRIEFING, FEBRUARY 3, 1992:

CUBA: TELEPHONE LINKS

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Q. CAN YOU GO INTO MORE DETAIL ABOUT AT&T'S EFFORT TO BEGIN USING A REPLACEMENT CABLE FOR U.S.-CUBA PHONE SERVICE? HOW MUCH REVENUE WOULD THIS BRING TO THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT?

A. AT&T HAS RECEIVED APPROVAL TO PROPOSE A FORMULA FOR LIMITED PAYMENTS TO THE CUBAN TELEPHONE COMPANY, BASED ON THE AMOUNT OF PHONE CALLS CARRIED ON THE CABLE. AS AT&T AND THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT ARE STILL DISCUSSING THIS MATTER, WE CANNOT COMMENT FURTHER ON IT.

Q. IS THIS THE FIRST TIME A U.S. ENTERPRISE HAS BEEN LICENSED IN THIS FASHION?

A. NO. AMERICAN COMPANIES HAVE BEEN LICENSED TO MAKE PAYMENTS TO THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTION WITH TELECOMMUNICATIONS, TRAVEL AND OTHER TYPES OF BUSINESS. IN THE CASE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS, PAYMENTS HAVE BEEN AUTHORIZED FOR MANY YEARS FOR THE OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE OF CABLE AND RADIO LINKS TO ENSURE CONTINUED TELEPHONE SERVICE BETWEEN THE U.S. AND CUBA. PAYMENTS FOR REVENUE FROM THIS SERVICE HAS PREVIOUSLY GONE TO AN ESCROW ACCOUNT. THE TRADE EMBARGO IS ADMINISTERED BY THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT'S OFFICE OF FOREIGN ASSETS CONTROL. I REFER YOU TO THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT FOR FURTHER DETAILS.

Q. WHAT ELSE HAS THE GOVERNMENT DONE TO FOSTER COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE U.S. AND CUBA?

A. WE FUND RADIO AND TV MARTI TO PROVIDE OBJECTIVE NEWS AND INFORMATION TO THE CUBAN PEOPLE. WE GRANT VISAS TO

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CUBAN AND AMERICAN ACADEMICS TO PARTICIPATE IN SCHOLARLY
EXCHANGES.

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